

## THE PROPHET'S PATH



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As we begin, I would like to start this lesson with a verse from Romans that will help give us a framework for whenever we study the things that the Bible has to teach us. In Romans 15:4 we read:

#### Romans 15:4

*<sup>4</sup>For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

This verse is telling us that the scriptures which had already been written (primarily the Old Testament), were written for us to learn from as believers in Christ. Oftentimes it can seem difficult to study from the Old Testament, but we should keep in mind that the things which happened back then, were written down for us to learn from.

Keeping that in mind, I want to approach this lesson from the lens of the Old Testament prophets. In particular, I want to note some of the things that would be considered as 'strange', which the prophets did, or were asked to do of God.

## STRANGE INSTRUCTIONS

The first prophet that we will look at in this lesson, is Ezekiel. Ezekiel prophesied during the time when Israel was a divided nation (Israel in the North and Judah in the South). Beginning in chapter 4 we will see one of the things that God instructed this prophet to do.

### Ezekiel 4:1-3

*<sup>1</sup> Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: <sup>2</sup> And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.*

*<sup>3</sup> Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.*

Basically, Ezekiel was told to take a tile (a brick) and engrave the city of Jerusalem on it. Then he was told to “lay siege” on it, which means: *to surround and blockade a city, town, or fortress by an army attempting to capture it.*

This is a strange and specific instruction that God gave to Ezekiel. But God was using this prophet to personify and illustrate *something* that was happening in the relationship between God and His people. Continuing to verse 4, we read:

### Ezekiel 4:4-5

*<sup>4</sup> Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity.*

*<sup>5</sup> For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.*

Here we see another strange instruction. Ezekiel was told to lie down only on his left side for 390 days, as a sign for the years of iniquity and rebellion of ‘the house Israel’ against God. As we continue reading, we will see the instruction given to Ezekiel concerning the ‘house of Judah’.

### Ezekiel 4:6

*<sup>6</sup> And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.*

Here, Ezekiel was now told to lay down on his right side for 40 days, signifying the 40 years that Judah was in a rebellious state. When looked at objectively, these are very strange instructions. Why would God ask him to do that?

If we read even further to verses 9 through 12, we also see the instructions of what he was to eat during those days. And particularly in verse 12 he is told:

#### **Ezekiel 4:12**

*<sup>12</sup> And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight.*

Yes, that is in your Bible. We see here that God is asking the prophet to do something **very** strange. But it was to prove a point and to show the state of pollution in the people. God was exhibiting the condition of the people *through* the prophet Ezekiel. Again, a very strange instruction.

The next prophet I want to look at is the prophet Hosea. Beginning in chapter 1 we read the account of when “The word of the LORD” came unto Hosea. And in verse 2 we read:

#### **Hosea 1:2**

*<sup>2</sup> The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.*

So, literally the Lord told this man to take a woman of “ill repute” and not only make her his wife, but also to bear children with her. This is another very strange instruction, but nevertheless it is in our Bible. And again, God was using this to show an aspect of His relationship with His people.

Next, we will look at the Prophet Isaiah. If we go to Isaiah chapter 20, we will see a strange command or instruction given to that prophet.

#### **Isaiah 20:2-3**

*<sup>2</sup> At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.*

*<sup>3</sup> And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;*

Again, we see another very strange instruction that the Lord gave to one of His prophets. Although Egypt and Ethiopia were mighty and powerful nations, Isaiah’s nakedness was a sign for how they appeared in God’s eyes (similar to what we read in Revelation 3:17).

Lastly, we will look at perhaps the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, Moses. Going to Exodus chapter 3 we read about Moses receiving his instruction from God. This one may not seem as strange as the others we have read so far, but when considering the full context of the situation and Moses' reaction, it was indeed a strange instruction that he was given.

### Exodus 3:10-11

*<sup>10</sup> Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. <sup>11</sup> And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*

So, here we see God sending a prophet into Egypt to deliver His people who were in bondage. Through this prophet (Moses), God showed Himself as savior to His people.

Hopefully we are all familiar with the mighty works that God did through Moses in order to free the children of Israel. And once the people were delivered, God shared with Moses something that He was going to do...

**He would raise up *another* prophet 'like' Moses - and *that* prophet, the people will hear.**  
(Deuteronomy 18:15)

That is the prophet I really want to focus on in this lesson.

## THAT OTHER PROPHET

Keeping in mind the things we have already read concerning the Old Testament prophets, we will now go to Luke chapter 24 where we see this "other prophet" being spoken of.

For context, this is after Jesus' crucifixion, His death, His burial, and His resurrection. As two of Jesus disciples were walking along the road to Emmaus, Jesus "drew near, and went with them." He asked them what they were talking about and why they were sad. In Luke 24:19 we read:

### Luke 24:19

*<sup>19</sup> And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:*

We know Jesus as many things - He is the Son of God, obviously. He is also the Christ. He has many titles and roles but here we clearly see it stated that He was a prophet – "mighty in deed". We are also told plainly in the book of Acts that Jesus was the prophet 'like' Moses, who God said that He would raise up (Acts 3:20-26).

So, I would now like to look at **this** prophet and see what God asked *Him* to do (in light of what God asked the other prophets to do). Staying here in the book of Luke, we will now go over to chapter 18. And starting in verse 31, speaking of Jesus it says:

### **Luke 18:31-33**

<sup>31</sup> Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

<sup>32</sup> For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: <sup>33</sup> And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

It is interesting to note that although Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit in **all** that He did (Luke 4:1), here we see that He also knew of the *scriptures* which foretold the things that He would suffer. As Jesus was teaching and going about His ministry, **He was fully aware of what was to come**. He knew His ‘instructions’ from the Father and the strange thing that God had sent Him to do. Jesus knew that He would be mistreated and spit upon, disrespected and even crucified. And as it says here, on the third day “He shall rise again”.

Even when teaching, Jesus spoke of the instruction that came from the Father concerning what He was sent to do. Beginning in verse 9 of Luke chapter 20, Jesus gives a parable that illustrates what His ‘instructions’ were.

### **Luke 20:9-15**

<sup>9</sup> *Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.*

<sup>10</sup> *And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.*

<sup>11</sup> *And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.*

<sup>12</sup> *And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.*

<sup>13</sup> *Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.*

<sup>14</sup> *But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.*

*<sup>15</sup> So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?*

In this parable, the first servants that are sent to the people were actually the prophets in the Old Testament days. Jesus speaks about them being mistreated and 'sent away empty'. Basically, the people would not listen to them.

Then Jesus shows His understanding of what His fate would be, when He speaks of Himself (the Son) coming to 'the husbandmen'. They were going to kill him and throw him out. So again, even in His parable teachings Jesus shows that *He knew* what the undertaking was, which God had sent Him to fulfill.

To willingly go to the cross and die for us is truly incredible, even when compared to the 'strange things' that God had instructed the Old Testament prophets to do. We see this clearly in some of the other gospels, where it shows that Jesus was fully aware of His ultimate mission. Going now to Matthew chapter 16, Peter gives the declaration that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Jesus replies that this is the rock which the church would be built on. Then in verse 21, we read:

#### **Matthew 16:21**

*<sup>21</sup> From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

Once again, we see the same thing – that Jesus knew this was His fate, and He also knew that it was His mission.

Staying here in the book of Matthew, let's go to chapter 26. This is getting a little closer to the end. In verse 24 we see that Jesus was fully aware of another aspect of what was to come - Jesus knew that He would be betrayed.

#### **Matthew 26:23-24**

*<sup>23</sup> And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.*

*<sup>24</sup> The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.*

Jesus was aware that this was going to be part of His assignment. After gathering His disciples to follow Him, one of them would betray Him - and this act of betrayal was also foretold in the scriptures: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" – Psalm 41:9

Continuing in Matthew chapter 26, we read as Jesus was approaching the fulfillment of His mission. When the guards and multitude of people came to capture Jesus, Peter responded by cutting the ear of the high priest's servant with his sword. We read Jesus' response beginning in verse 52:

#### **Matthew 26:52-54**

*<sup>52</sup> Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

Verse 53...

*<sup>53</sup> Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*

And then in verse 54 He says...

*<sup>54</sup> But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*

There was a lot that Jesus could have done to avoid going to the cross. When they came to 'arrest' Him, He could have called for as many angels as He needed to be rescued from the people, but we see Jesus ask a question in verse 54: '*but how then, should the scriptures be fulfilled?...*'

Continuing to verse 55, it says:

#### **Matthew 26:55-56**

*<sup>55</sup> In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.*

*<sup>56</sup> But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.*

This is the fulfillment of yet another prophecy in Zechariah 13:7 "*...smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*". Jesus knew all of these things ahead of time – He knew this was His assignment. And yet He fulfilled it, seeing the joy that was set before Him on the other side of the cross. (Hebrews 12:2-3).

We will now look at a verse from the book of John where we see Jesus speaking of the "strange thing" that God required Him to do. In John chapter 10 beginning in verse 17 we read:



## John 10:17-18

*<sup>17</sup> Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.<sup>18</sup> No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

In this scripture we see again that Jesus knew that the laying down of His life was necessary to fulfill the commandment which He received from God. And though this would bring Him suffering, pain and even death... we see that Jesus was willing to go through it all, in order to fulfill the will of God.

## THE WILL OF GOD

Though all of the prophets were obedient in doing the things that God had asked of them, **no other prophet** was ever given the commandment to suffer and die. But Jesus made a way for us to avoid eternal suffering and death, by offering Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world. And He did it willingly - because it was the will of God.

Staying in the book of John we see Jesus speaking of His commitment to do the will of the Father.

## John 5:30

*<sup>30</sup> I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

Here Jesus was letting us know that He set aside any 'personal' will of His own to fulfill that mission which was given to Him of the Father.

We see the same beautifully spoken of in the book of Hebrews. This is referencing a prophecy written concerning Jesus in the Psalms. Beginning in verse 5 of Hebrews chapter 10 we read:

## Hebrews 10:5-7

*<sup>5</sup> Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: <sup>6</sup> In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

The will of God was of utmost importance to Jesus, and it is vitally important for us as well. As **Jesus is our ultimate example**, we see that He perfectly fulfilled the will that God had for Him.



We also read in scripture something very important that Jesus spoke concerning the will of God. In the book of Matthew chapter 7, verse 21 we read:

### **Matthew 7:21**

*21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Jesus plainly tells us here that *doing the will of God is essential in order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. But in order to do the will of God, we must first know what the will of God is for us.

When trying to answer the question: “What is the will of the Father for us?” many people mistakenly go to John chapter 6 verse 40 for the answer: “*And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

This verse is often erroneously taught to mean that the will of God for us is to just “believe”. But if we carefully read that verse with a little context, we will see that the *true* meaning of John 6:40 is not concerning the will of God *for us*; it is the will of God regarding Jesus.

### **John 6:37-40**

*37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

*38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

*39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

*40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Though this verse does speak of what will happen for those who truly believe, it is really speaking about what **Jesus will do and the will of God for Him**. So, we are still left with our question from Matthew 7:21... What is the will of God *for us*? If we want to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, we must do the will of the Father. What then shall we do?...

The answer to that can be known by reading Matthew 7:21 in the full context of which it was spoken. Beginning at Matthew chapter 5 all the way through chapter 7, Jesus teaches many things before telling us about the importance of doing the will of the Father. Rather than including the full text in this lesson, we encourage you to mindfully consider the words of Jesus in those chapters during your Bible study time.

## FOR US

For those who have already obeyed the gospel and are now *in* Christ (the Church), the will of God for us is also clearly stated by Paul in his first letter to the church at Thessalonica.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:2-7

<sup>2</sup> *For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.*

<sup>3</sup> *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

<sup>4</sup> *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;*

<sup>5</sup> *Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:*

<sup>6</sup> *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.*

<sup>7</sup> *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

Here, as well as in his other letters, Paul wrote that the will of God for the church is to live their lives in a way that is holy and acceptable unto God (Romans 12:1-2). Verses like these were written to those who had already believed and obeyed the gospel. As Jesus said in Mark 16:16, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

But what about those who have not yet obeyed the gospel - what should they do?

Well the question, “What shall we do?” was also asked by those who heard the very first gospel message. In Acts chapter 2, after hearing the gospel of **who Jesus is** and **what He had done**, we read:

### Acts 2:37

<sup>37</sup> *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

And this is the answer that was given to the people...

### Acts 2:38

<sup>38</sup> *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

After hearing and believing the gospel of *who Jesus is* and *what He had done*, it was time for them to believe according to **what Jesus said** (Mark 16:16).

Peter's answer in Acts 2:38 is also a reflection of Jesus as our ultimate example in fulfilling the will of God. Just as Jesus willingly endured the difficulties that He faced, we should do likewise.

For us, to turn from our sinful ways in repentance can be difficult. And denying sinful desires that are contrary to the will of God can be truly painful.

The "strange thing" that we are commanded to do is to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of our sins. When looked at objectively, it does not seem to make sense. But according to scripture we are following the example of Jesus, as Paul explains in Romans chapter 6.

### **Romans 6:4-6**

*<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

*<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

*<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

So, we see that Paul is connecting this baptism to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By being baptized *in* Jesus, we join Him in the 'strange instruction' that God required of Him.

As the scripture that we began this lesson with, stated: the 'things written aforetime were written for our learning'. We have reviewed many examples throughout scripture of God's servants (the prophets) simply obeying the instructions that they received from the Lord. And now we see that the most important example for us is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

In our very first lesson, [Games, Puzzles, & Riddles](#), there was an important assessment question at the end, which still applies today. Whether you are someone in Christ or someone who has not yet obeyed the gospel, feel free to [contact us](#) and we will help you in whatever way we can to walk the path and fulfill the will that God has for you.

### **Psalms 119:105**

*<sup>105</sup> Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*